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defeat inflicted in the fall of 1861 on a Federal army seeking to maintain or to recover the communications of Washington with the North. Following so soon after the battle of Bull Run, the moral effect of such a victory in raising the spirits and hopes of the Confederates and in lowering the confidence of the Northern public in a successful issue of the war, would have been enormous. The effect abroad, also, where every one was inclined to deprecate the war as an unjustifiable resort to force on the part of the North, and as certain to terminate in the failure of the Union armies, would have been most marked. It is not necessary to suppose that either Washington or Baltimore should have been taken; troops enough might have been collected while the Confederate generals were detained before the fortifications, to preserve these cities from capture; but if the Federal army had been badly defeated in a pitched battle, and the Confederates had been for a time successful, the result of the campaign would almost certainly have been very unfortunate for the cause of the North, even if no irreparable disaster had been sustained. Therefore we say that Mr. Davis made a serious, and probably a very serious, error, when he refused to adopt the advice of his

generals, and
allowed, this opportunity of striking such
a telling
blow for the cause which he represented
to pass by
unimproved.

Let us return now to the northern side
of the
Potomac. It was hardly to be expected
that the
young general who had been summoned
to take
charge of the Federal army after the
severe defeat